United Nations E/C.16/2004/2

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
30 January 2004

Original: English

Committee of Experts on Public Administration
Third session
New York, 29 March-2 April 2004
Agenda item 3
Revitalizing public administration

Revitalizing public administration as a strategic action for sustainable human development: an overview

Report of the Secretariat*

Summary

Public administration is often seen as a set of State institutions, processes, procedures, systems and organizational structures, practices and behaviour for managing public affairs to serve the public interest. However, since the latter part of the 1970s, the meaning of public administration has gradually become diluted, giving way to the concept of public management.

Since that time, initiatives for public sector reform geared towards introducing and popularizing management approaches and methods of private sector enterprises have been undertaken in many countries, paving the way for a modified concept of public administration known as public management, which puts emphasis on issues of effectiveness, efficiency, economy, deregulation, client orientation and rolling back the frontiers of the State.

After more than 20 years of public sector reform, the results of public management have been mixed. It is increasingly suspected that the emphasis put on market forces and deregulation, as well as on efficiency and savings in the public sector, may have had a negative impact on the traditional mandate of the State, leading to irregularities, including inadequate protection of the vulnerable in the provision of public services such as health and education, and causing lapses in the management of issues related to State security. In being overly eager to adopt the management behaviour of private enterprise, the public sector may have lost touch

* The present report is being submitted late due to late responses from members of the Committee.

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with its responsibility to the general public interest in a number of respects. In this context, the concept of governance has gained increasing respect because of its focus on participation, people's interest, equity, transparency and accountability in the management of public affairs. However, public administration still needs new life in order to refocus its efforts in the management of public affairs on the critical missions of the State as well as on guaranteeing the general public interest.

During the Committee's second session in April 2003, it was recommended that, given that revitalizing and revalidating public administration to enable the State to perform its changing role was an overarching priority, it should be the focus of the Committee's discussion at future meetings.[a] There is need to find out how to revitalize public administration to enable it to play its critical and central role in providing fundamental guarantees, such as ensuring peace and security, the rule of law and the protection of individual life and property, as well as its catalyst role in sustainable human development.

This presentation does not negate either public management or governance concepts, but rethinks public administration, public management and governance with a view to constructing a renewed conceptual basis for revitalizing public administration. Below are some concepts that may emerge as benchmarks in revitalizing public administration:

- Redefining and reaffirming the fundamental missions of the State, including its role in ensuring peace, security and stability and the rule of law and order, as well as creating a sustainable environment conducive to individual and private sector initiative and economic growth and human development;
- Developing and sustaining partnerships and collaboration among the institutions of the public sector, civil society and the private sector;
- Promoting cooperation among institutions of the State and public administration in different countries in order to facilitate the exchange of successful experiences in renewing public administration;
- Selectively integrating principles and practices of public management and governance in public administration so as to build and promote public administration systems that are efficient, economic and effective as well as participative, responsive, equitable and accountable to the public;
- Instilling, within the sphere of public administration, structures and a culture of research, including the application of new information and communication technologies which can play a critical role in giving new life to public administration;
- Encouraging the attraction, recruitment and retention of the best human resources in the public sector.

During its third session, the Committee will discuss issues relating to the revitalization of public administration focusing on: developing institutions of governance and public administration in Africa; enhancing human capital; the role of human resources in revitalizing public administration; promoting shared and engaged governance; and encouraging the growth and proper governance of an information and knowledge society.

Revitalizing public administration will need further exploration, discussion and proposals from the Committee. The following issues need to be focused on in future meetings of the Committee:

(a) Redefinition and reaffirmation of the role of the State in public policy;

(b) Public service transparency, accountability, professionalism, ethics and integrity;

(c) Innovations in governance and public administration;

(d) Building effective combinations of decentralization and centralization policies and promoting the evaluation of decentralization policies.

[a] *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2003, Supplement No. 44* (E/2003/44), chap. IV, para. 3.

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I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 50/225 on public administration and development, the General Assembly emphasized the critical role of sound public administration in the process of development. This same view has since been reiterated in various forums, spurring efforts at global, regional and national levels to strengthen the capacities of public administration to enable it to support efforts of poverty reduction and sustainable human development. However, despite the emphasis demonstrated at the highest levels, there are still conceptual and practical ambiguities indicating that public administration needs to be revitalized to play an effective enabling and catalytic role on the development process. At its meeting in July 2003, the Committee of Experts on Public Administration highlighted the need to focus on the issue of how to revitalize public administration to provide effective support to poverty reduction efforts and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. The present paper gives an overview of activities in this field and serves as a preamble to the four other presentations on this subject: "Strengthening public administration for the Millennium Development Goals: a partnership building approach" (E/C.16/2004/5), "The role of the public sector in advancing the knowledge society" (E/C.16/2004/4), "Developing institutions of governance and public administration in Africa" (E/C.16/2004/6), and the "role of human resources in revitalizing public administration" (E/C.16/2004/3).

II. Public administration, public management and good governance: conceptual mutations and cumulative paradigm shifts

2. In order to have a common understanding of why there is a need to discuss the subject of revitalizing public administration, one has to understand the thought processes that have shaped the current conceptual context. In the recent trend of thinking and discourse on managing public affairs, there has been a cumulative paradigm movement away from public administration and towards governance via public management. While it is clear that, following these trends and paradigm shifts, there have been complementarities among the three concepts and practices (public administration, public management and governance), there have been losses as well as gains for public administration as an institution, a structural organization, a set of practices and a domain of values and principles through which the State prepares, makes, implements, monitors, controls and evaluates its decisions and policies as well as its performance of the full range of its functions, including the delivery of services that are critical to human development.

3. Public administration, as a bureaucratic organization, is conceived to work within a set of rules with legitimate, delegated, legal-rational authority, expertise, impartiality, continuity, speed and accuracy, predictability, standardization, integrity and professionalism in order to satisfy the general public interest. As an instrument of the State,[1] it is expected to provide the fundamental bases of human development and security, including freedom of the individual, protection of life and property, justice, protection of basic human rights, stability and peaceful resolution of conflict, whether in allocation and distribution of resources or otherwise. In this light, effective public administration is indispensable for the sustainability of the rule of law.

4. However, from the latter part of the 1970s, public administration has attracted considerable criticism from those advocating a more prominent role for private enterprise in development. Such criticism highlighted public administration practices, which were characterized, inter alia, by red tape, sluggishness, insensitivity to public needs, wasteful utilization of public resources and undue focus on process and procedure rather than on results, and negatively viewed the whole instrument of the State (public administration) as a big burden on the tax payer. A school of thought emerged that believed that the direction of public affairs would best be performed by the application of the management principles and practices of private enterprise, which pay particular attention to efficiency and economy in the utilization of resources, effectiveness, customer focus and reliance on market forces especially in matters of economic decision-making. Increasing the role and influence of the private sector called for rolling back the frontiers of the State, in effect pushing for minimizing the size of the public sector and narrowing the field of operation of public administration. Instead of public administration the common term used was public management.

5. In the 1990s, the negative effect of undue emphasis on efficiency and economy in the running of public affairs started to manifest itself in the deterioration of the delivery of public services especially those closely linked to the satisfaction of the general public interest, which could be referred to as public goods. Such goods and services could not be adequately provided through strict adherence to the practices and dictates of market forces. Where the public administrator had paid too much attention to the rules, regulations, controls, procedures and processes at the expense of providing effective services to the public, the public manager placed excessive focus on efficiency and economy in the utilization of resources, again to the detriment of service to the citizen. Lapses in regulation and controls provided avenues for increased corruption in public offices and private sector practices in the management of human resources (such as contracting), eroded the commitment to public service values and favoured employment rather than career development in many countries. Ultimately the public did not get the satisfaction expected. It became apparent that there was a great difference between market forces and public interest and that market forces did not necessarily always decide in favour of the public interest. In addition, the public was not always called in to participate in deciding, planning, monitoring and evaluating government actions to ensure that the interest of the public remained at the centre of government action.

6. In the search for a stronger say and a stronger role for the citizen in influencing the way public managers planned and implemented the functioning of the State with equity, transparency and accountability, a concept of governance emerged that emphasized the participation and interest of the public as well as the strong accountability of public officials in control of public management. That concept of "good governance" introduced the important elements of partnerships and shared accountability whereby various stakeholders in the public, private and civil society sectors at local, national, regional and global levels would come together to work as a team to manage public affairs as part of the development process.

III. Integrating public management and good governance to revitalize public administration as the core mechanism for service delivery

7. In view of the above synopsis of the trends and conceptual mutations in the field of public administration, the question of what revitalizing public administration entails and what a revitalized public administration looks like needs to be considered with a critical eye. For instance, there is the question of nomenclature that has yet to be sorted out:

> "It is clear that a lot will have to be done to make public administration an efficient, effective, responsive, transparent and accountable instrument for public policy, planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and overall sustainable development. One extra problem for formulators of policies, strategies and programmes for strengthening public administration in post-conflict countries concerns which basic concept is to be followed (building, re-building, reconstructing, reforming, rehabilitating, transformation, reconfiguring, or re-engineering?)."[2]

In any discussion of revitalizing public administration, the new meaning the term "revitalization" brings to the paradigm of expressions of making public administration a sharper instrument of State action must be considered.

8. If it is understood that to revitalize means to imbue with new life and vitality, then the introduction of "New Public Management" and the emphasis currently put on good governance are part and parcel of efforts to give new life to public administration. One could, however, take the view that the introduction of New Public Management and the zeal with which the concept of good governance is advocated constitute forces that have negated and eroded public administration in its adherence to impartial rule application and regulatory control, as well as its observance of the value of public service within the principles of continuity, expertise and predictability.

9. The midpoint position would be more positive and beneficial to the process of giving new life to public administration for effective public service and performance of the core functions of the State. Conceptually, public administration constitutes the crust of public management as well as of good governance. The fault in the trends outlined above lies in the fact that those who advocate New Public Management as well as those who advocate good governance perceive public administration as something apart from either concept. A closer analysis shows that without proper public administration, neither concept can be effective. It is this central position of public administration that needs to be refocused and repositioned in the process of revitalizing public administration. What needs to be done is to determine exactly what revitalizing public administration entails.

10. First, there is a need to recognize, accept and reaffirm the central position of public administration as a vital determinant in the practice of public management and good governance. Second, the central position occupied by public administration and the core functions it must carry out have to be redefined, focusing on those functions that would be jeopardized if left to the private sector or civil society. Such functions include justice and security, regulatory control, as well as the delivery of services critical to the process of human development, such as

education, health and environmental protection. It is clear that an overstretched public administration carrying out functions that can best be executed by the private sector or civil society will hardly be effective.

11. However, and this is the third facet in the process of revitalizing public administration, if the practice of public administration is to be given new life, it must not retreat to its archaic role of exclusive regulatory control and its paternalistic and monopolistic approach to service delivery. Public administration must recognize the value and virtue of partnerships among the various sectors, cooperating with actors in the private and civil society sectors at local, national, regional and global levels to galvanize experience, knowledge, skills and to utilize resources for effective response to public needs. Partnerships constitute a major component of the process of giving new life to public administration. The revitalization of public administration entails bringing together the best attributes of the three concepts (public administration, public management and good governance) to construct a sharp instrument for effective, efficient, responsive, transparent and accountable functioning of the State. In a general way, a revitalized public administration, including its institutions, structures, systems, procedures, processes, networks, relationships, practices, approaches and methods of work, as well as leadership behaviour, should be effective, efficient, economic, transparent, accountable, equitable and responsive to the needs of the public and should embrace the participation of a broad spectrum of stakeholders and actors in all sectors at all levels. In addition, the key position of a revitalized public administration as a critical and determining actor in the process of human development must be recognized and valued. The significance of the central, anchoring role of public administration is recognized even by those who have been working on "political" and/or "democratic" governance, and it is acknowledged that the existence of political institutions (such as electoral management bodies, parliaments, human rights institutions, etc.) does not ensure access to services by the public if the mechanisms of public administration for the planning and delivery of services are not streamlined.

IV. Revitalizing public administration: a purposeful and context-sensitive strategic action

12. While every State requires public administration as an instrument for its functioning, the context within which it needs to be revitalized and the purpose for which such revitalization is conceived and actualized must determine the shape and character it adopts. This process calls for a thorough situational and contextual analysis to gain a full grasp of the internal and external environmental factors militating for or constraining revitalization, as well as of the institutional capacities required to effect it. Blanket or ready-made measures to reform public administration are not the best suited for revitalization. For example, public administration in developed countries may be revitalized in order to manage and sustain national wealth for the maximum benefit of the citizenry, while the revitalization of public administration in developing countries may have the ultimate purpose of alleviating poverty and creating conducive conditions for sustainable human development. In such different situations, one would not expect public administration systems to have synonymous missions or structures, even if one might expect similarities in basic principles and values.

13. The purpose of revitalizing public administration can be expressed at three different levels: the global level, in the form of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals; the regional level, for example in the form of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD); and the national level, in the form of national development strategies. The critical point is that revitalizing public administration for its own sake is not a very profitable endeavour. Whether within the context of developing or developed countries, the revitalization of governance and public administration, including strengthening leadership, is carried out in order to achieve sustainable development, improve the lives of people living in poverty, reverse the continuous degradation of the global environment and surmount the particular challenges now facing the world. One of the global challenges is how to achieve the United Nations Millennium Goals. Briefly these are:

- Eradication of extreme poverty and hunger
- Achievement of universal primary education
- Promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women
- Improvement of maternal health
- Combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
- Ensuring environmental sustainability
- Development of a global partnership for development

14. At the global level, public administration is the anchor of successful achievement of the above-cited Millennium Development Goals. First, the values and principles (human dignity, equality, equity, freedom, solidarity, tolerance, respect for nature and shared responsibility) that Member States of the United Nations reiterated in General Assembly resolution 55/2, which spells out the Millennium Development Goals, cannot possibly be promoted and upheld without effective public administration institutions. The collaborative and cooperative action of civil society and private sector institutions at all levels are clearly necessary in this process, but they are supplementary to the core mission and function of public administration as the guarantor of the general interest. In addition, the ambitious scope of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals quoted above needs effective public administration for their achievement, in particular through the adoption of appropriate and effective policies, strategies and programmes as well as the provision of the necessary leadership and resources for implementation. At the regional level, efforts to foster sustainable human development and poverty reduction will not bear fruit without effective public administration at the national level. Here, the example of NEPAD, which focuses on strengthening good governance and public administration as a critical ingredient in the implementation of the entire programme is illustrative.

15. At the national level, the case of Rwanda illustrates this point. Rwanda's efforts to revitalize its public administration included the writing of a new constitution to guide sustained response to the needs of the population. Explaining how this was done, the text of the preamble to the national constitution states:

> "In order to elaborate a Constitution that would respond to the expectations of the population and be attuned to the socio-political context of the country, the legal and Constitutional Commission opted for a participatory and inclusive

> approach that would ensure full participation of the population. A plan of consultation was prepared to this effect. The latter was supposed to provide Rwandans with a forum where they could easily express their ideas and to facilitate the exploitation and the processing of the information gathered ... It is important to point out that besides specific themes of most classical constitutions, some typical aspects of the Rwandan context were deeply debated in order to come up with principles to integrate into the new Constitution. These are, namely: positive values in the Rwandan culture and mechanisms to promote the effective enjoyment of rights and freedoms, the protection of disadvantaged people in the community, the positive experience from the transition such as decentralization, Gacaca jurisdictions, etc.".[3]

16. It is clear from the above that Rwanda did not leave the constitution-making exercise to eminent legal experts or insiders from the existing public administration system but rather opened up to inputs from all stakeholders in order to tailor the constitution to the needs of the entire country. What emerges from these global regional and national examples is that effective public administration is indispensable to the process of human development.

V. Revitalizing public administration: engaged participatory and inclusive governance

17. One aspect of public administration that needs to be in tune with current aspirations of the public concerns how public administration systems (including institutions, structures, laws, processes, procedures and public policies) are established in each country. Traditionally, the design of public administration has been left to experts (in law, politics, policy, organizational design, public administration and so forth). This has had the tendency of putting the public at the receiving end of public administration, a passive recipient or, in come cases, a latecomer to its operations, brought in to provide some support and legitimacy for policies already decided on. What is needed now is to directly engage the public not only in the act of public administration but also in its final design, as well as in monitoring and evaluating its achievements. These issues are all related to transparency, accountability and engaged governance. The universalism built into traditional systems of public administration is in disharmony with the understanding and requirements of engaged governance. Traditional public administration took the concept of the public to mean one universal public, while it is now accepted that there are various "publics", which reflect specific situations and needs.

> "The word 'public' often seems to be a synonym for 'universal'. But we are not just public administrators; we are also administrators of various 'publics', in the form of communities, neighbourhoods, interest groups and a wide variety of wildly diverging but very concrete citizens, residents, persons. And it is the reality of these diverse publics that makes the application of universals difficult."[4]

18. Whether public administration is operating at the global, regional, national or local community levels, the multitude of public interests and needs that have to be satisfied in a complex variety of ways make it highly desirable that there be a close engagement, involvement and participation of the various "publics" in the identification, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of public

administration. The process of revitalizing public administration itself should adopt the same engagement and participatory approaches. The Ibero-American Charter for the Public Service, adopted at the fifth Ibero-American Conference of Ministers for Public Administration and State Reform, also makes this strong point:

> "Various national experiences have shown how advisable and even necessary it is for the design and implementation of public administration reform and modernization policies in Ibero-American countries to be rooted in decision-making processes that secure majority support or socio-political consensus. This would ensure that such policies are institutionally viable and sustainable. It has been noted that decisions concerning public administration reform or modernization policies are often dictated by critical circumstances that, in and of themselves, make it actually inevitable, given the very short response times, to opt for the alternative of building consensus or garnering broad-based support.
>
> "In the light of the foregoing, Governments and policy makers and opinion leaders should anticipate the need for such reform and modernization policies and take the time to create propitious conditions for their adoption through consensus building or inclusive decision-making."[5]

19. The same spirit and emphasis on the need for participation and consultation is embedded in the Charter for the Public Service in Africa in the following terms:

> "It shall be the responsibility of the administration to ensure that mechanisms of participation and consultation involving civil society and other stakeholders are effectively put in place through consultative forums or advisory bodies."[6]

20. A revitalized public administration should be built on, and should contribute to, the process of interaction between three types of actors from: Government; civil society; and the private sector. Fostering interaction among these actors is the essence of governance and effective public administration today. It is through the engagement and participation of various "publics" that exclusion from decision-making with regard to the provision of public services will be avoided, or at least minimized, and the spirit of serving the public recaptured and revalorized.

VI. Revitalizing public administration: recapturing and revalorizing values and principles of public service

21. Public administration will acquire renewed vitality by demonstrating its relevance in a given context. As global, regional and national conditions currently stand, public administration will be upheld in value if it makes a visible positive contribution in the fields of poverty reduction and sustainable human development, not only through ensuring a conducive environment for key players in the private and civil society sectors to operate without hindrance, but also through visibly planning and providing essential public services, such as education and health, without which poverty reduction and sustainable human development cannot be achieved. It is in the provision of essential services and in executing regulatory control functions that public administration makes direct interface with civil society at large, and it is there that it should prove its relevance, in particular through the application of the principles and upholding values of public service.

22. The Charter for the Public Service in Africa emphasizes the principles of equality of treatment, neutrality, legality and continuity. It equally stipulates proximity and accessibility of service, participation, consultation and mediation, quality, effectiveness and efficiency, evaluation of services, transparency and information, speed and responsiveness, reliability and confidentiality of information concerning citizens, professionalism, ethics and integrity and moral rectitude, as critical aspects of public service on the continent. Revitalizing public administration in regions where there has been participative thinking concerning the subject at a political level should entail sustained implementation of commitments such as the ones expressed in both charters quoted above.

VII. Revitalizing public administration: reforming and realigning institutions and human resources

23. Principles and values, however noble, cannot be effectively applied within an inappropriate institutional set-up. The process of revitalizing public administration must therefore include setting up or reforming institutions to enable them to perform effectively. In addition, revitalized institutions of public administration must be staffed by capable personnel with adequate knowledge, skills, attitude and networks to confront the challenges facing public administration in a sustainable manner. This implies that revitalizing public administration must equally concern uplifting the capacity of human resources in the public sector. A revitalized public administration must be capable of building up, strengthening and appropriately utilizing human capital. Renewed institutions, together with their human resources, must be capable of embracing partnership with other stakeholders and key players in the private sector and civil society to facilitate the practice of engaged or shared governance.

24. Engaged governance requires participation, transparency, information and the capacity for knowledge-sharing as well as flexibility and ability in order to adapt to new thinking within the information society. It is expected that a revitalized public administration will embrace and master the tenets of creating and managing a knowledge society, while at the same time ensuring that the entire public administration adopts attributes of a learning organization in order to catalyse and respond to change and cope with the challenges and opportunities of globalization. This means that a revitalized public administration is one that contributes to the development of, and benefits from, a knowledge society. In this regard, the relationship of public administration with a knowledge society is two-pronged: on one hand, it must deal with how a knowledge society contributes to the ability of public administration to perform new roles in the context of paradigm shifts; and on the other, it needs to be a facilitating factor in creating a knowledge society. This dual relationship is a strong aspect of what is increasingly being recognized as the challenges of governing the information society.

VIII. Conclusion

25. **The presentation takes revitalizing public administration as a critical ingredient in the process of achieving the Millennium Development Goals and reducing poverty. Conceptually, the introduction of public management and good governance as concepts of managing public affairs are seen to be part and**

parcel of an ongoing process of giving public administration a new life. At this point, a search for public administration revitalization should integrate the three concepts of public administration, public management and good governance, while recognizing that public administration, because of its emphasis on the general public interest and the higher missions of the State, lies at the centre. A revitalized public administration will give vibrancy to the interaction among the various actors in the public, private and civil society sectors to encourage effective participation and collaboration in the process of human development, encouraging transparency and accountability. Without effective public administration, the threads that bring together the efforts of all these actors will weaken, common efforts will become disorganized, and there will be undue emphasis on individual survival to the detriment of the general interest. This is likely to breed corruption and widespread unethical behaviour, lack of integrity in the management of public affairs, inadequate regulatory action, which may lead to increased criminal activity and insecurity, as well as unplanned development, which will leave the vulnerable, including children and the disabled, without proper support, increasing poverty. Public administration as an instrument of State action and the guarantor of the general interest should be revitalized to champion the ongoing efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

26. During the Committee's second session in April 2003, it was recommended that since revitalizing and revalidating public administration to enable the State to perform its changing role was an overarching priority, it should be the focus of the Committee's discussion at future meetings.[7] The Committee will therefore discuss, during its current session, issues related to the revitalization of public administration focusing on: developing institutions of governance and public administration in Africa; enhancing human capital; the role of human resources in revitalizing public administration; promoting shared and engaged governance; and encouraging the growth and proper governance of an information and knowledge society.

27. Revitalizing public administration will need further exploration, discussion and proposals from the Committee. The following issues need to be examined at future meetings of the Committee:

(a) Redefinition and reaffirmation of the role of the State in public policy and socio-economic development:

Within the current general understanding of the necessity of partnerships and collaborative and participatory governance in the process of human development and poverty reduction, there is need to redefine and reaffirm the role of the State vis-à-vis that of the private sector and civil society. A number of questions surrounding this issue need to be addressed, including the following: (i) is the role of the State universal or will it change following particular circumstances of a given country? (ii) are there experiences in some countries in redefining and reaffirming the role of the State that can be shared to provide inputs in formulating frameworks for redefining and reaffirming the missions of the State? (iii) through what approaches and using what methods should the redefinition and reaffirmation of the role of the State be carried out? (iv) who should bear the overall responsibility of redefining and reaffirming the role of the State?

(b) **Repositioning and reorganizing the public service to embrace the principles of good governance, partnership, transparency, accountability, professionalism, ethics and integrity:**

One of the issues that needs to be addressed in revitalizing public administration is how to reposition it as a partnering institution to enhance capacity in inclusive decision-making. An inclusive public administration is also expected to be a more transparent, accountable and trustworthy institution. What is important is that reform in public administration must be viewed within the overall principles of "good governance". Partnerships, a critical aspect of "good governance", need to be seen as key tools of development management and as accountable institutional frameworks dedicated to the common goals of poverty reduction and sustainable human development. Typically, government/non-government partnership initiatives tend to be area-based or issue-specific, with discrete (and often short-term) time frames, owing to which, the establishment of accountability frameworks, the development of partner capacity and the conduct of evaluations that could attest to the contribution of partnerships to long-term strategic goals are often not completed. Therefore, when considering partnerships as a tool of good governance and as a framework for informed and inclusive decision-making, issues of institutional adjustments, procedural changes (including, where necessary, securing legislative mandates) and capacity-building for all partnering institutions must be carefully thought through.

(c) **Innovations in governance and public administration:**

Revitalizing public administration needs to be approached with an innovative spirit to avoid reverting to the archaic methods used in traditional approaches. In many instances, it will be necessary to study specifications in order to propose appropriate innovative public administration measures, while in other situations it will be possible to apply innovations that have been tested and proved workable and successful elsewhere. However, the sharing of existing innovations in public administration, as well as their transferability and applicability, will need to be carefully examined to avoid the transfer of innovations that will not work.

(d) **Building effective combinations of decentralization and centralization policies to promote people-centred development:**

Decentralized governance is being promoted in a number of countries because it is believed that it provides a structural arrangement through which grass-roots populations and communities, with support from other national, regional and international actors, can participate in the fight against poverty. However, decentralization may not be taken as the key to the solution to all problems of development. An appropriate mix of centralization and decentralization needs to be created, taking into account the specific circumstances and capacities of all stakeholders involved. A series of questions must be addressed, some of them critical, including: (i) what objectives should be pursued in decentralizing? (ii) what forms of decentralization are suitable for what circumstances? (iii) what are the various capacities that need to be developed in order to have effective decentralization? (iv) in highly centralized Governments, what approaches and methods can support effective initiation, formulation and implementation of the decentralization policy? and (v) what

experiences worldwide can be shared to inform the formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of decentralization policies?

Notes

[1] See Jean-Louis Quermonne, *L'appareil administrative de l'Etat* (Editions du Seuil, Paris, 1991).

[2] See John-Mary Kauzya: "Approaches, processes, and methodologies for reconstructing governance and public administration in post-conflict countries: selected cases from the experience of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs in Africa", presented during the Ad hoc expert group meeting on anchoring peace: reconstructing governance and public administration for peaceful, sustainable development organized by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs in Yaoundé, Cameroon, 14 and 15 July 2003.

[3] See http://www.embarwanda-china/constitution.htm.

[4] See F. Neil Brady, "'Publics' Administration and the Ethics of Particularity", in *Public Administration Review*, September/October 2003, vol. 63, No. 5.

[5] See A/58/193, annex II, paras. 1 and 2.

[6] See article 9 of the Charter for the Public Service in Africa, adopted at the Third Pan-African Conference of Civil Service Ministers, held in Windhoek on 5 and 6 February 2001.

[7] *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2003, Supplement No. 44* (E/2003/44), chap. IV, para. 3.